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DIASSUWODA 428-83

SUMMARY OF
SIGNIFICANT UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
AND CIVIL DISTURBANCE ACTIVITIES

8 December 1983

EL SALVADOR: SECURITY CONCERNS FOR VICE PRESIDENT BUSH'S TRIP (S/NF/NC/WN/ORCON)

(S/NF/NC/WN/ORCON) Vice President George Bush will visit El Salvador on 11 December. During the past three months, the perceived threat to official United States personnel has increased within El Salvador from both extremes of the political spectrum. The potential threat appears to be equally serious from the armed left which is represented by the members of the insurgent umbrella group (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front/FMLN) and the various radical rightist death squads with ties to the ultra-conservative Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and elements of the Public Security Corps (National Guard/GN, National Police/PN, Treasury Police/PH).

(S/NF/NC/WN/ORCON) Comment: It is possible that some if not all five member groups under the FMLN umbrella will undertake some action against the Vice President's party or other highly visible U.S. targets such as the U.S. Embassy. The guerrillas are currently on the offensive in their traditional rural power bases. Recent reporting has indicated, however, that the FMLN is preparing for increased urban warfare - especially in the capital. Impressed with the relative successes of the government against their representatives, the FMLN's various groups have tightened security measures. The FMLN allegedly is planning to stage extensive military activities in San Salvador during the second half of December. The latter reportedly is to include attacks on the headquarters of the GN and the PH. If elements of the FMLN do launch major attacks in San Salvador it will mark the first time since the premature and failed "final offensive" of 1981 that the FMLN has ventured into the capital in strength. To attack the headquarters of Salvador's two most aggressive uniformed services, especially during or slightly after the visit of Vice President Bush would draw attention dramatically to the central government's vulnerability. The FMLN has generally displayed an appreciation both of U.S. public opinion and media coverage of the Salvadoran situation. Their current urban warfare plans may, therefore, represent a gamble to influence and further erode domestic opinion with the specific object of demonstrating that additional U.S. aid is futile. On the other extreme the radical right has a proven capability to take action against real and imagined enemies. The recent articles in U.S. publications on the death squads and the denial of a visa to the President of the Constituent Assembly and ARENA boss, Roberto D'Aubuisson have heightened anti-U.S. sentiment on the far right. The ultra-right poses an additional and unique danger because of their entree to Public Security Corps personnel. Furthermore, the denial of a visa to Salvador's most prominent civilian rightist permits the far right to exploit latent anti-U.S. feeling and nationalism. The recent announcement of

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the formation of a political party (Party of National Liberation/PLN) by the death squad, Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA), and references in the ESA/PLN communique to "foreign intervention" can only further poison the political atmosphere within El Salvador on the eve of Mr. Bush's brief visit. In summary, at the present time there is a clear potential threat to U.S. officials in El Salvador from both extremes.

PERU: BOMB THREAT AT AMERICAN EMBASSY (U)

(C) The U.S. Embassy in Lima reported that at 1522 hours, 5 December 1983, the Embassy switchboard received a telephoned bomb threat. A subsequent search of the Chancery located an unidentified package in the third floor office of a Peruvian (FSN) secretary who worked in the Economic Section. At the time of the discovery, the FSN was absent on sick leave. A partial evacuation of all four floors of the Embassy was effected and a Peruvian bomb disposal unit removed the package from the building in a "bomb blanket." Inspection of the package which was wrapped in brown paper, disclosed a transparent plastic bag marked by manufacturer as fertilizer. This bag had been opened and stapled shut. The bomb squad subsequently identified the contents as one kilogram of ammonium nitrate, a substance used in fertilizers and explosives. Further inspection failed to disclose any detonating device. The unmarked package, partially obscured by a three-hole paper punch, was located on the floor underneath a copying machine. The FSN secretary, during questioning, noted that the paper punch was not from her office. A search of other office areas in the Embassy failed to locate any other suspicious packages and all employees returned to work.

(S/NF/NC/WN) Comment: In DIASSUWCA 219-83, we reported the 5 November attempted bombing of the Marine Security Guard residence in Lima. In this instance, two packages were left at the front door. The first contained 1.5 kilograms of silver nitrate and blasting caps; the second, containing 25 pounds of sand, was positioned to direct the explosion towards the residence door. Additionally, there were reports that expressed official Peruvian concern that the group "Shining Path" (SL), might start to target U.S. personnel and installations because of the Grenada intervention. The area Regional Security Officer in La Paz has directed that the Embassy contract guard supervisor and guards on duty be questioned to determine how the package was able to be slipped into the Embassy. Results of investigation will be reported upon completion of all leads.

COLOMBIA: PRESIDENT'S BROTHER RELEASED (U)

(U) Jaime Betancur, brother of Colombian President Belisario Betancur, was released unharmed and in good condition in the early morning hours of 7 December 1983. According to reports, Betancur's release took place after Army of National Liberation (ELN) terrorists had called four Colombian journalists and then took them to the place where they were holding Jaime Betancur. After reiterating their demands (see DIASSUWCA 230-83), three of the journalists were

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United States, and Turkey will be the targets of ASALA operations until Armenia is liberated. The caller denied, in the face of recent reports, that there had been a split in the ASALA organization. This is the first recent instance in which someone speaking in the name of ASALA has threatened to attack U.S. interests.

SPAIN: POSSIBLE TARGETING OF U.S. NAVY OFFICERS BY GRAPO (U)

(C/WN) Recent counterterrorist operations by Spanish security authorities produced the arrest of two members of "GRUPO Resistencia Anti-Fascista, Fundado en el 1 Octubre" (GRAPO) in Valencia, Spain and the discovery of a GRAPO safehouse in Gijon, Spain. Security personnel, while searching the safehouse, discovered some notes which indicated that GRAPO members had identified a restaurant called the "Casa Flores" in Puerto Santa Maria, Spain, as a restaurant frequented on Friday nights by high ranking U.S. Naval officers. The restaurant is located approximately five miles from the U.S. Naval Station in Rota, Spain.

(C/WN) Comment: This restaurant has been only one of several eating establishments in the area patronized by U.S. Naval officers over the past several years. While the actual time during which GRAPO gathered this information is unknown, U.S. personnel transiting the area should be made aware of the possible dangers involved. The recent arrests of key GRAPO members has resulted in a substantial decline in GRAPO terrorist activity.

GUATEMALA: ALLEGED PLANS TO USE CAR BOMBS AGAINST U.S. AND ISRAELIS (U)

(S/NF/NC/WN/ORCON) According to recent reporting, a Guatemalan insurgent group allegedly has claimed that since September the organization has been casing the Israeli and U.S. Embassies in Guatemala City to study the viability of placing a car bomb at one or both embassies in the near future. As of October, the terrorists had reportedly acquired the necessary explosives and a stolen vehicle for the operation; however, as of mid to late October the terrorists had no means of securely positioning the car near enough to either diplomatic mission. Reportedly, military leaders of the organization regard security at both embassies, as it now exists, as too tight to afford a reasonable chance of success. In addition, there is at the present time no information regarding a date for the bombing.

(S/NF/NC/WN/ORCON) Comment: The terrorists indicated, not surprisingly, that the purpose of the bombings would be to protest U.S./Israeli support to governments opposed to leftist guerrillas in Central America. In addition, the group involved has apparently been weakened since 1982, presumably by government actions, and a highly visible media splash would bolster the cause and raise their profile. It is believed that the information surrounding this alleged car bombing scheme probably surfaced before the invasion of Grenada, but during or after the Beirut bombing. The latter undoubtedly provided Guatemala's armed left with an example, and the invasion can only serve to energize existing anti-U.S. animus, especially in the Caribbean Basin.

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DIASSUWCCA 217-83

GUATEMALA: U.S. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE ATTACKED (U)

(U) The residence of U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, Frederick Chapin, came under fire late Friday night, 4 November 1983, from gunmen in at least one, but possibly two, passing cars. According to reports, automatic weapons fire raked the walls of the Ambassador's home in Guatemala City. Armed guards stationed at the residence returned fire, but the gunmen escaped. Ambassador Chapin was at home during the attack but no one was hurt. The Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) has claimed responsibility for the attack saying the attack was "in protest of the U.S. military invasion against the island of Grenada."

(C/NF) Comment: The FAR attack does not come as a surprise and we believe that further attacks can be expected throughout the region as various terrorist elements continue to react to the events in Grenada.

ECUADOR: CONFRONTATION BETWEEN COMMUNIST ACTIVISTS AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE'S BODYGUARDS (U)

[redacted] a mixed crowd of activists from the Communist Party of Ecuador (PCE) and the Popular Democratic Movement (MPD) attacked the campaign headquarters of Social Christian (PSC) presidential candidate Leon Febres-Cordero Rivadeneira in Machala with the objective of destroying campaign materials. [redacted] members of Febres-Cordero's paramilitary bodyguard were present and reportedly fired on the attackers, wounding four.

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(S/NF/NC/WN) Comment: In DIASSUWCDA's 162-83 and 211-83, we reported on the possibility of an assassination being attempted on Febres-Cordero. The above report is interesting in that it underlines the fears of the far left concerning a Febres-Cordero Presidency. As we stated earlier, in light of the leftists' fear, an assassination attempt is not inconceivable. The above report is of interest from the counterterrorist perspective in two ways. First, the presence of "bodyguards," while not a new twist in South American politics, may be indicative of the concern Febres-Cordero and his supporters have concerning the reports of an attempted assassination. Beyond that, the measures used by the bodyguards, firing on and, reportedly, wounding four "opponents" can also be considered a rather forceful "statement." Further, if the report is true concerning the advance notice received by the Febres-Cordero people, it would indicate a rather successful, or lucky, intelligence operation. Secondly, while there is presently no indication of any other motive other than destruction of campaign materials, the thought does occur, in light of the previous reporting, that this may have served as a "test" of the security surrounding Febres-Cordero. Again, we believe that there is increasing possibility of an attempt being made to the life of Febres-Cordero.

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EL SALVADOR: BISHOP'S FATHER ALLEGEDLY ABDUCTED (U)

(U) On 3 November, the U.S. Embassy's political officer was notified by Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez that his father, Mercedes Salome Rosa, had been abducted during the early morning hours of 3 November from his home in Sociedad, Morazan Department. Bishop Rosa believes that his father was abducted